

PS 3505
.R985
A7
1915
Copy 1

Annals of a Soul
Crumpton





Class PS 350.5
Book R985 A7
Copyright N^o 1915

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

The
ANNALS *of* A SOUL

BY

Beatrice Crumpton



3
9 1 1
3 1
1 1
1 1 1
2 2 3

BROADWAY PUBLISHING CO.

835 BROADWAY, NEW YORK

TS 3505
R 985 A7
1915

Copyright, 1915,
BY
BROADWAY PUBLISHING Co.

TRANSFERRED FROM
COPYRIGHT OFFICE
JUN 3 1915



JAN 29 1915

DEDICATION.

*To you, my friend, who loves me more
When my book is read than you loved before,
And to you, mine enemy: if you hate.
For to all who read, I dedicate
From love, or hate, I do not shrink,
The "Annals" are offered to ALL who THINK.*

BEATRICE CRUMPTON.

PREFACE.

WHEN these pages were written the writer had not in mind their subsequent publication. Therefore the reader will find no attempt at polished phraseology, no studied literary achievement, no effort as an essayist. It is in no manner a "novel" and there will be found no plot, nor careful building toward a climax. It is the record of one woman's life; or rather such parts of one woman's life as overflowed her small personality. Because of this overflow she turned instinctively to a diary, for to no friend could some delicate personalities be confided; to no individual however dear could she lay bear her soul. She could not intrude upon another her perplexities, her errors, her personal convictions. A diary wherein these could be recorded, where in black and white she could confront herself, would be satisfying and helpful.

In her soft, womanish way she longed for a confidant. To the same degree, in a hard, womanly way did she demand a judge.

Who could be one, or the other? She knew of none and so this diary has been to her the tender confidant, the unsparing judge. First, in her creation of it, then in her perusal thereof.

P R E F A C E

The earlier chapters were not written during the period with which they deal. This is readily perceived when the age of the child is considered, but are faithful records of such childish experiences as were strong enough to be retained in the child's memory through subsequent years. That they *were* retained, and with them the sensations they originally produced, is proof of their importance in the development of the child's mind. Why are they published? Oh! gentle reader, why do we clasp some pebbles round about with gold, and wear them on our bosoms? Why seal in golden locket a little wisp of hair? Why place upon the wall or cabinet the varied trophies of a long remembered journey?

'Tis not because of their intrinsic worth, but that they speak in that unsyllabled language the heart alone can understand.

There is no alphabet by which they may be catalogued, no system of mathematics by which the soul computes their worth, but hearts will throb in sympathy and understanding, and souls clasp hands in common comprehension.

So, as you frame a picture and place it on the wall, or deck your bosom with the pebble, bound in gold, I bind the records of a little life between the covers of a book, and crystallize Her memory.

About it, thought waves tremble: from Her to us—from us to others, as we learn a little more of human life and longing, and thereby more of kinship with each other.

The Annals of a Soul

CHAPTER I.

How very blue—how vast, the arching sky. The child with wide blue eyes, as blue as the sky itself gazes long and steadily into the azure vastness. At first, the sensation is all of pleasure. The blue color pleases my childish fancy (for *I* am that wide-eyed child), and I look and look till something of its immensity reaches my young consciousness and with a gasping cry I turn and clasp my hands closely over my face that I may shut out the big blue ocean of sight, that seems to drown my senses, and open my eyes again to smaller things.

I resume my familiar toys, my doll tea-tables under the large oak tree, where the tea dishes are acorns from the boughs above me, and my velvet carpet is the lush green grass. The wind stirs the leaves of the trees, and again the little tea-table is forgotten. I stand back to look at the topmost quivering leaf of that mighty tree. Again the sensation of pleasure loses itself in an overwhelming sense of my own smallness and the vastness of the

THE ANNALS OF A SOUL

forms of nature by which I am surrounded. I stand, a tiny atom of humanity with tightly clenched hands and staring eyes drinking draughts of consciousness far too large and full for my young comprehension, till with a choking cry I fall upon my face and hide among the tall grasses until the feeling of awe somewhat spends itself. The weird notes of the mourning doves warn me that the summer day is waning and, grasping my toys, I run as fast as my small feet can patter into the shelter of house, companions and homely scenes. There, a normal child again, I am serene, calm and childish.

This is perhaps the first strong impression made upon me and the sensations there experienced have not been, can never be, forgotten while consciousness remains. Sometimes I believe that in the next life, when I shall stand in awesome wonder before the great embodied Good, I may feel in that same way, and will cry out, in a kind of fear till tender remembered hands clasp mine, and lead me gently into the protecting presence of divine love.

CHAPTER II.

WHY am I, a young creature, fit only, by reason of my small number of years lived, for a sort of young animal existence, so full of restlessness, the restlessness of an unsatisfied mind?

What atavism, unlooked for, unrecognized, has found embodiment in my small feminine personality? for, not only am I unchildish in my thoughts, but also am I wary and guard well the thoughts, beliefs, desires, so all my own, so unchildish, so heretical if compared with those that have been my daily food since babyhood. Who could believe, seeing the small, fair child, with infantile charms enhanced by dainty babyish garments, with doll and cart trundling along the board walk that gleams, a golden pathway in the summer sun, that thoughts of why, and wherefore, and strong rebellion toward the forces incomprehensible, made dire confusion in that young child's soul?

Yet so it was, and even then the thought, the cry, of that young soul was Truth! but give me Truth and I will ask no more.

Then, like the vastness of the sky and trees in days gone by, the vastness of the mysteries enfolds me, and as I oft had hidden sight of sky and trees

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

in younger days, I now clasp little hands over my eyes endeavoring to shut out thoughts and questionings and hasten into some kindly human presence. This mood passes, I am a child comforted, diverted, by homely scenes and warm companionship. It was almost as if some striving soul, outreaching for the best, had found its home in this young body, as if the soul, years old, had worn out one clay domicile, and entered the new-born body of this woman-child to further seek for truth. A soul made brave enough to risk all, if but assured of knowledge at the last.

Such thoughts had lodgement in my consciousness, I, a little child who had not heard the word "reincarnation" prattled to dolls of places, scenes and experiences in half belief that they were true. Never had I been beyond the confines of this rural home, yet wondrous tales I whispered of my travels in a far off country, where in some other form I wandered through palace halls and beauteous gardens, where tall vases and white sculptured forms gleamed coldly among the trees. Such trees and flowers as I had never seen in this environment.

But this child had a dual nature, and if there was, as seemed to be, this atavism, all of good, of longing for the best, and holiest, there lived close by its side, another atavism, a barbarous impulse to do violence. In strongest contrast to the first named mood, I would in earliest years revel in wanton rebellion against the world, assuring myself of soli-

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

tude, would rave and rage, summing up all recklessness in the reiterated statement that "I didn't care." That small, defiant statement stood for much. It meant rebellion, hate, defiance. It meant the panoply of indifference: The armor of an utter disregard. The bravery that is not bravery but only deadened sensibilities.

Such were the warring elements within my consciousness, such thoughts were grappling with each other, while older persons held me on their knees or playmates prattled with me of our common toys and games.

And all the while I guarded well my secret, realizing that in this drama of life, the part of childhood was the part assigned to me to play.

CHAPTER III.

I AM twelve years old to-day! and I do not like myself! I am not satisfied. But I must appear to be satisfied. To-day my cousins came to spend the day and "celebrate" my birthday. So very dear of them to come and very kind to bring me little toy presents, but someway I do not care for them. How pretty my mother, as she smiled and kissed me after tying my clean apron sashes, and smoothing my yellow-brown hair back from my round pink face. I don't like my starched apron, but I must "live up to it." That is new (I heard it in the drawing-room). To "live up" to a starched apron and a round, pink face and yellow-brown hair, must be to act like a baby (as he treated me, the gentleman who talked about "living up" to things). He saw me standing in the doorway. I had thought I would go in to show I was not afraid of strange gentlemen with big black eyes, so I went in, making believe inside that I was a fine lady, but as I stood I forgot to make believe lady and felt short, dumpy and pink, yes, and starched! Of all things most, I felt starched! At first they seemed not to know I was there, and I was glad (having forgotten to "make believe" inside), and I was turning to go

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

when the tall gentleman, with the big black eyes held out his hands to me, and said "come and see me, little girl," as if I were a baby. He looked so good and kind that I took one step toward him, then the "make believe lady" part would not let me. My face grew warm, I knew it grew more pink and I was angry, so I held my head as high as possible and tried to hide the tremble in my voice when I replied: "You can see me from across the room, I am not a baby," and then I spoiled it all by acting like a baby for I began to cry and ran out. How I hated him when I heard him say, "What a strange child, and her eyes do not seem the eyes of a child, they seem the eyes of a woman." I am sorry I went in, I am glad to be here, alone with my dear trees. I love to huddle down among the shrubbery and think. Nothing matters much if one may think and "make believe."

When I am alone I can be anything, anybody. To-day I was a tall, stately lady, and knew a great deal. I had written a large book and I could read in any language. I had long, slim fingers, and wore soft, clinging garments trailing about me. I looked elegant and "lived up to it." My pretty mother looked sorrowful, seeing my untidy hair and I was sorry to have crushed my starched apron and my starched sunbonnet down in the shrubbery, but I did hate them. The bonnet was so stiff, just "done up," and felt damp in the back of the neck.

CHAPTER IV.

TO-DAY is my thirteenth birthday! I have torn out all of the leaves in this blessed journal written since that horrid twelfth birthday. They didn't seem to be worth while. I am ever so much improved since then, I am a little taller, not quite so "pink" but still "dumpy." I begin to think I will always be "dumpy," but it has been of great comfort to me to remember that my eyes "have the look of a woman's eyes."

I have heard myself called a "strange child" and "precocious," and my pretty mother predicts for me a brilliant future. (I am not very old, but one learns at thirteen that mothers are partial so I don't let that spoil me.)

I suppose I ought to write something very important, after a whole year, but what is important? Perhaps this! I have been trying to be good, to be different. It had never seemed to me that I was very bad, till suddenly it seemed to be *me* to whom the preacher was talking, *I* was the great sinner. It was for me the Christ had suffered and died! Oh, the agony of feeling oneself to be a sinner, a murderer! "He" suffered for me, because of me, my sin, the sin of not loving Him enough. My

THE ANNALS OF A SOUL

sweet mother regrets that she has allowed me to hear this preacher, she says it is not right to deal with children thus, and that an emotional child should be protected from such disquieting things, so I must not carry to her this awful sense of guilt. If I deserve it, I alone must suffer, if I do not, how much greater the reason that I keep the pain from others. The preacher talked of "Hell." Is "Hell" a place? or did he mean the blackness of despair there is in feeling oneself a sinner?

Some weeks have passed since my fourteenth birthday and they have been too full of goings and comings, of books and lessons to find time to write in this dear old diary. Poor little me on the thirteenth birthday! How I suffered in the tormenting thoughts of my terrible sinfulness. But that feeling wore away. Perhaps the preacher was not very, very sure. Perhaps he didn't mean me, and if he did mean me I can't help it, and I shall crowd out such distressing thoughts. Why not think of beautiful things, the comforting, the entertaining, as we find them in books? There seems to be an endless number of books. When I am tired of myself, of my surroundings, how perfectly easy to be someone else, do other things, exist in other surroundings, in a book.

I am allowed to wear my dresses "sans starch." I am not so "trig." I am "mussy" (so I am told), but I am "comfy," and—spared the torments of

starch, more amiable. The sunbonnet of orange hue, its crisp starchiness (and, oh horror, its dampness in the back of the neck), is a thing of the past. The "pinkness" of my round face remains, but I am reconciled to that and have decided that it is not so very objectionable after all.

I have not outgrown my dreaming (is it dreaming?) of that beautiful garden, the statues, the tall vases of barbaric splendor! Sometimes I try to tell of them, to ask if ever in my infancy I visited this place, but I am curtly, albeit kindly, advised "not to be foolish," that "I must have dreamed it," but when I am a grown-up lady, rich and famous as I long to be, and believe I may, I shall search for that spot and I will know it as my own, when I have found it.

I am ambitious, my books and lessons delight me for they are the stepping stones to that success I long for. Will it come to me? I desire love, wealth, fame, but mostly fame. If I knew I must be ordinary always, I would not live.

I am fifteen years old! Quite a young lady, with one trained gown (because I pleaded so). The despised brown hair, coiled high on my head, somewhat contradicts the childish roundness of the face beneath.

I believe in myself! I am a woman! and a woman can sway men. Through and by this power she can dominate nations. Fame, Love, Riches—

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

the universe with all it holds is in my small round fist, if I am wise. Have I wisdom to use it well? and is it worth the price? The price—is knowledge! Will knowledge bring happiness? Again that childish gasp, confronting the immensities! 'Tis like the wideness of the sky and the tallness of the trees when they so overwhelmed me as a child, but not so easily can they be laid aside, nor comfort be so readily procured by mingling with others full of mirth and laughter absorbed with youthful pleasurings, for while they laugh and jest, aye, while *I* laugh and jest, there is the haunting thirst for truth, the crying out of the soul in travail, the demand of an unsatisfied longing. For I am not content to drift, to accept a half knowledge, a half solution to these soul questionings that swarm about my inward sight with the same tantalizing form of insects swarming about bodily eyes.

CHAPTER V.

I AM sixteen years old and have achieved some things. I have met men and women of brilliant minds, and they have met with recognition the spark of genius in me, all my own. They have held out to me the blessed hand of fellowship and prophesied for me a brilliant future. Have made a pretty toy of me and passed me on from one to another with flattering words and promises of fame and fortune. Yes, I, a girl of sixteen years, have tasted the sweets of gratified vanity and realize in my own tiny way the joys of gratified ambition, after years of endeavor, as shown to me by these veterans in the mental strife.

And I have learned another lesson. I have seen men stripped of all their boasted strength by one look from my eyes, and I have felt the prowess of my power, when in my small hands lay the making or unmaking of the goal for which they long had labored, for they, boasted lords of creation, will toil and sweat, and bleed for some loved and long cherished plan, will plot and scheme, will sacrifice and slay, will near achievement, then be stripped of all and humbled in the dust if but some woman chooses so to lead them from the self-elected track.

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

And though some one (or many) may repent, and curse the weakness, and revile the one (or many) this does not hold the others, for still remains in her the "eternal womanly" this power to make or mar.

And where is "he," the Prince for whom I wait? And shall it be that in a time to come I will uphold his lofty purposes by lovelight from my eyes, and love-words from my lips? Use every line of feminine allurements to hold him to his best, and ne'er relax nor waver till he gains the topmost round of fame's far-reaching stair, or, will I slay the high ambitions of the ones who come my way, by siren song, and feed my vanity by counting in my net the floundering, foolish, ones entrapped?

A dual nature mine indeed, when side by side are struggling two such natures, bound in one small personality,

CHAPTER VI.

I AM a wife, and I have been most honored when a man, an honest man, and so the "noblest work of God," has wished for me, and in his courtly way has called the honor his, when I am won.

It was a childish face beneath the veil of tulle, a childish figure in the trailing robes of white.

I find the dignity of wifehood as pleasant as a novel toy is to a child, and it is pleasant to be loved. Pleasant to receive the deference accorded to the "Madame" with the consideration shown a tender child. For such I seem to many, and one, a world-worn man, a transient visitor in the town who wandered in to see the bridal party, said "It was a shame to see the little maid who should be romping gaily with her mates, in bridal finery and henceforth to be girl no more," and when another spoke of the "pretty scene" he raved and said it was a sight to him too sad for words. And I, the girl, the child-wife, had my childish joy in conquest, in achievement, in the wealth of love and kindness.

Had my heart pangs at the parting with the past, and all it held. The best of my young nature sprang into prominence and with sincere desires for worthi-

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

ness and honest purpose to do right, I took my stand among the sisterhood of wives.

With the same tearless sobs, the same overwhelming sense of smallness in the world's great plan that filled my childish soul when I confronted the immensity of bending sky and forest trees as child, I now stand sore appalled at life's great problems and their magnitude.

The mourning doves may sound their warning cry but this bewildered woman-child may not cast out the thoughts they rouse, and run with speedy feet into the midst of family and homely scenes to be a part of all, for she is to be never more again the same.

CHAPTER VII.

CHAOS! The Universe does not pursue its even way, Impossible! The planetary system is at war within itself. Space illimitable is full of sounds, and sights, chaotic. There is no abiding place, no firmness for the young and untried feet. Bewilderment! Horror! Fear! And—no! Brave soul of youth that faces all and holds the word “regret” behind dumb lips, takes heart and faces all. Is calm within the centre of a seething mass of wreckage, sees the waves recede, the planets settle into places each its own, and tumble onward in their trackless way. Old Earth resumes her even tenor and the Sun shines forth on this new-born creature, a “woman” not a “woman-child.”

Traveler, do you remember how you have stood on mountain tops, breathed deeply, stood your tallest height, and felt new power, greater capability, because of an accomplished ascent? Is not the feeling similar when new responsibilities are met and dealt with? You feel a great surprise that you have had the strength to climb to such a height and with a new respect you recognize the “selfhood” that is yours. 'Twas thus I met my duties, cares, experiences, with firmer poise, a closer hold upon my impulses, a firmer grasp on reason and control.

THE ANNALS OF A SOUL

No more the impulsive movement from laughter to tears, from tears to mirth, but tears were dried by forcing other thoughts into my mind to counter-balance all, and laughter was moderate and seemly lest its gladness be quenched by some perverse and impish mental gymnast of my brain.

Blessed moderation! It may dampen joy, but also does the power of moderation hold in leash the impulses, save pangs of after thoughts, sometimes self-torturing (and yet—a “reasonable” woman, has she not lost something truly feminine when she remembers always to be reasonable?)

CHAPTER VIII.

DOES Heaven sometimes bend and touch the Earth? Do Angels guard? Does Hell recede, and every imp of darkness hide away and Satan find no weak, unguarded thought? If so, 'tis when the babes lie close and helpless in maternal arms, and press their soft mouths to the breast and look with eyes of innocence into the eyes that beam devotion for the helpless thing that rests serenely in the cradling arms.

In the vast love of motherhood lies all abnegation, all lowly self-effacement, all heroism, all of all that is divine. The tempter finds no lodgment for his wiles, for Heaven and all its angels guards the woman with a child in arms.

The children came, and after these brief periods of paradise, they gathered years, and with the years, temptations, toil, ambitions, zeal for achievement—and greater now than ever yet before—the mysteries! The magnitude of these responsibilities brought back into my striving soul the helplessness, the smallness, of myself and my own power, and, like the child that screamed and closed her eyes and ran because the sky was vast, and trees were tall, and mourning doves sang weirdly, the world-worn

THE ANNALS OF A SOUL

woman, mutely as to lips, moaned in her soul, and trembled at the thought of her smallness in the midst of forces vast and incomprehensible when she would long to teach the truth.

If Hell is pain and anguish, then in Hell I lived and writhed in all the torments of remorse and self-reproach, that I had dared to bear and nourish, rear to maturity, creatures possessing, perhaps, immortality, and surely, power to suffer temporal pangs.

They had not asked for life, a gift so questionable. They had not been consulted, but all defenceless marshalled forth upon the battlefield of life, with but the equipment of inherited weakness. Thus, pleasures, pains, cares, responsibilities, joys and sorrows, with always the bulwark of a protecting and unobtrusive presence.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Influence! It came into my consciousness when wounded, beaten down and buffeted about by cruel circumstances. 'Twas like the glory of the morning sun upon the sea, or like the rainbow spanning sea and sky. 'Twas touch of hands to hands outreaching in the dark, and the embrace of souls all spent in seeking each the other. It was a cooling potion held to fervid lips. It was a green oasis on the sandy plain of the most commonplace.

The Influence! It lifted me above the pettiness of trivialities. It taught me scorn of trickeries; it bruised my vanity, and healed the bruise by teaching me the value of selfhood, and like a cherished plant rescued, develops into beauteous form and color, drinks in the sunlight and the dew, so my bruised soul basked in the sunlight of this love and gathered strength by wrestling with the gales of his displeasure, while tears of sorrow when I pleased him not drenched every flower that bloomed in the heart-garden of my love and thankfulness.

CHAPTER X.

Now am I sure that the remembered gardens with the statues gleaming whitely among the green gloss of the lush foliage, the quaint and stately mansion with tall vases in the pillared porches somewhere exists, and I have seen it! Sometime, perhaps, in ages long ago, I wandered through its winding paths and loved its forms and colors with a love so strong that in my consciousness remains the pictured memory, a true vision of the concrete reality.

To him who knows and understands me and, great boon! has taught me how to know and understand myself, I wistfully related all the memories of this fair spot, and when he said, "Aye, dear, and I was there," and, in his own dear way refreshed the dimness of my memories by pictures sharply drawn by his far clearer mind, I knew that in the ages yet to come, as in the ages of the past, I must take for my watchword evermore the word "Advance," and as in ages long before "The Influence" had led me through the gardens fair so it would meet me in my groping need, would lift me when I stumbled, chide me when I erred and crown me with a blessed approval when I learn to stand more firmly for the selfhood that is I.

T H E A N N A L S O F A S O U L

So I must be courageous, I must meet with bravery the cark of cares, and I must learn submission. Accept as part of this great education all that comes in all the guises worn by heartlessness. And I must bear the pains of travail of the soul in bringing forth a truth, must suffer and be strong.

CHAPTER XI.

MUST "suffer," and be "strong"? Ah, yes! but, greater lessen still, to learn the ways of happiness.

How best to be and to impart a cheerful and inspiring spirit, and never trail in soiling dust the banner with the word inscribed "Advance."

I stand upon the mountain tops of all completeness. There are no clouds above me to obscure or blur the blue sky of my satisfaction, for I have passed them in the steep ascent to reach this goal.

"The Influence" has led me on, weeks, months, years, till doubt has vanished as a mist will burn out in the steady beams of sunlight.

With life's great problems met and solved, no more the gasping cry, appalled at all the mysteries. I look into the eyes of kindly courage. I clasp the hands that hold my own in steady clasp, and I believe! Believe! and what is my belief? That I am I, and but to do my best according to my light, to seek more light that best may bettered be, is my plain duty.

"Advancement" must the watchword be in spiritual and mental strivings.

EPILOGUE.

WE loved her, and we know she strived. This child, maid, woman, with the "dual nature." She "suffered" and was "strong." She found her "self-hood" and from her brave watchword never swerved.

If there is chance for this advancement she so sought, then She is pressing onward.

True to that loved "Influence" that "crushed the weakness from her strength" and having "bruised her," "healed the bruise," perhaps the ages yet to come hold in their undiscovered stores, for her, all peace and happiness, within the "beauteous gardens" "where the tall marbles gleam whitely among the green shrubberies" and "tall, barbaric vases stand upon the pillard porches."

Because of her we crystallize her thoughts between the covers of this book, and feel a tenderer compassion for every striving soul.

FINIS.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY

"The country Dr.," another name for one whose life is dedicated to humanity, consecrated to the noblest missions. The man who spares not himself, who has no settled hours for labor, rest, food, or recuperation, who lives among his people, shares their joy at births, and sorrow at deaths. The one who comes closest into the tragedies of the homes he blesses, nearer to the hearts than even the beloved spiritual advisors. For they—anointed ones—meet on the plane of spirituality the soul's needs only. The Doctor tides his beloved over the nauseous shoals of the commonplace, and infuses healthful thoughts into sordid minds.

Grey, bent, old too soon, shabby, almost unkempt, but with the light of Heaven still glowing on his tired face, for in the passing of his friend, neighbor, patient, the gates had stood ajar a moment while the light streamed through and filled his saintly face with stuff that halos must be made of.

We sat together in the den where once the brother that we loved had worked and read and thought, where he had dreamed (or *did* he "dream"?) the experiences that by his will we now were privileged to read of—penned in the little book that he had called his "dearest friend," save us.

THE ANNALS OF A SOUL

We read: and as we lived with him page after page, from boyhood—till the time when he must leave us, we loved him all the way, and shared his hope that somewhere, and some time, he would clasp hands with that dear one, and bring to joyous culmination the best fulfillment of his striving soul.

The Book

I must have had a mother—what was she? Did she love the small, sullen face? Did she see beauty (as a mother sees) in that small, square, rebellious chin, the blinking and short-sighted eyes, the impertinent nose, and the clefts in the round, firm cheeks?

I wonder if she laughed and clasped me in her arms and lifted the stray lock of hair (destined to be so troublesome to the good Brothers who desired neatness) and kissed the spot that kept so fair, protected from the sun that tanned my face so dark a brown.

Perhaps a proud and virtuous young father loved us both and prophesied a wondrous future for his son, and laughed with her, this maybe mother, at the small replica of his square chin, and dimpled cheeks and wayward lock of hair.

Perhaps, and not perhaps—I do not know—for pious Brothers, with their cowls and robes—the hours of study and of prayer—with stipulated recreations, walks, and tasks.—These fill my memory casket, sealed, locked, and, careless of the key—doomed to be buried

in the past unless in some reincarnation may be felt the influence of these forgotten happenings.

It was a joyous day when Brother Ambrose, on some mission of kind deeds, took me to help dispense his charities. We wandered hand in hand and joy was tingling in my small feet that pressed the warm brown earth and in my young vibrant body and in my brain, so young and so receptive.

We passed a home, where from the door to gateway trailed a golden path. "Oh, Brother! see the angel in the walk!" I cried, and felt hot angry tears burn 'neath my lids when Brother Ambrose laughed and pulled me rather roughly by the hand and said: "Has it a halo—or white wings? You're daft, my son, the halo's but a bonnet made of yellow cloth, and wings are but the white arms of the child you saw."

* * * * *

I dreamed (or *did I dream?*) that night of peril for the child, of dangers to be met, of thorns for those small feet to walk upon, and then, a vision of the angel-child and one *not* on the shining walk of that snug rural home, but in a beauteous garden where white statues, and tall vases, gleamed white and color-splotched among deep greens of trees and grass.

* * * * *

There has been deep darkness, torturing pains, nauseous tastes and odors. Fear, with no known cause, and always dreams (but *are* they dreams?) of that small presence of the child, then older grown, the

maid, with soft and childish outlines, but eyes that held the mysteries of ages past and seek to solve the mysteries to come. She beckons and I follow—back, back, through fire, and flood, and darkness centuries old, with ever the stern resolve to guard her from all harm. Then on—and on—through maze of webs and rocky paths that bruise our feet, till at the last we journey side by side along a pleasant road that brings us to the gargoyle gates that open at our coming and disclose the alabaster statues, and the molten colors of the tall, barbaric vases among the soft lush green of trees and grass.

Good Brother Ambrose sheds hot tears of pity as he feeds me, drop by drop, the savory broth, and says, "You have been very ill, dear heart, but from the portals opening for you, the prayers we offered brought you back to us, our small young brother, much beloved."

* * * * * * *

Have I been hard? and have I bruised the flower that offered me but sweetness?

Alas! I could not see the plant distorted, ill-shapen and unkempt, when kindly pruning would insure its symmetry and grace. How greater far a soul in travail must be held to one high purpose, tho' it bleed.

From gold, the crucible must melt the dross. From her pure gold of lofty thought must be eliminated all the vanity and littleness that else would choke the nobleness that is herself.

THE ANNALS OF A SOUL

From that dear self-hood must be torn the parasites of all unworthy thought—and like the butterfly imprisoned in the cramped and viscid domicil cocoon, her soul must rise, a beauteous winged thing, upward and onward through the future years.

EPILOGUE

Dear doctor-friend, dear other one, you two—who loved me, read my book, this little book that chronicles some precious moments of my life. And now, good-by! for I have dreamed (or *have* I dreamed?) again—and she is beckoning to me from afar.

Some time, somewhere, and after—what? The Garden—where long centuries ago we rambled hand in hand.

We will not be surprised nor strangers—but will know.

FINIS

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 603 995 6

